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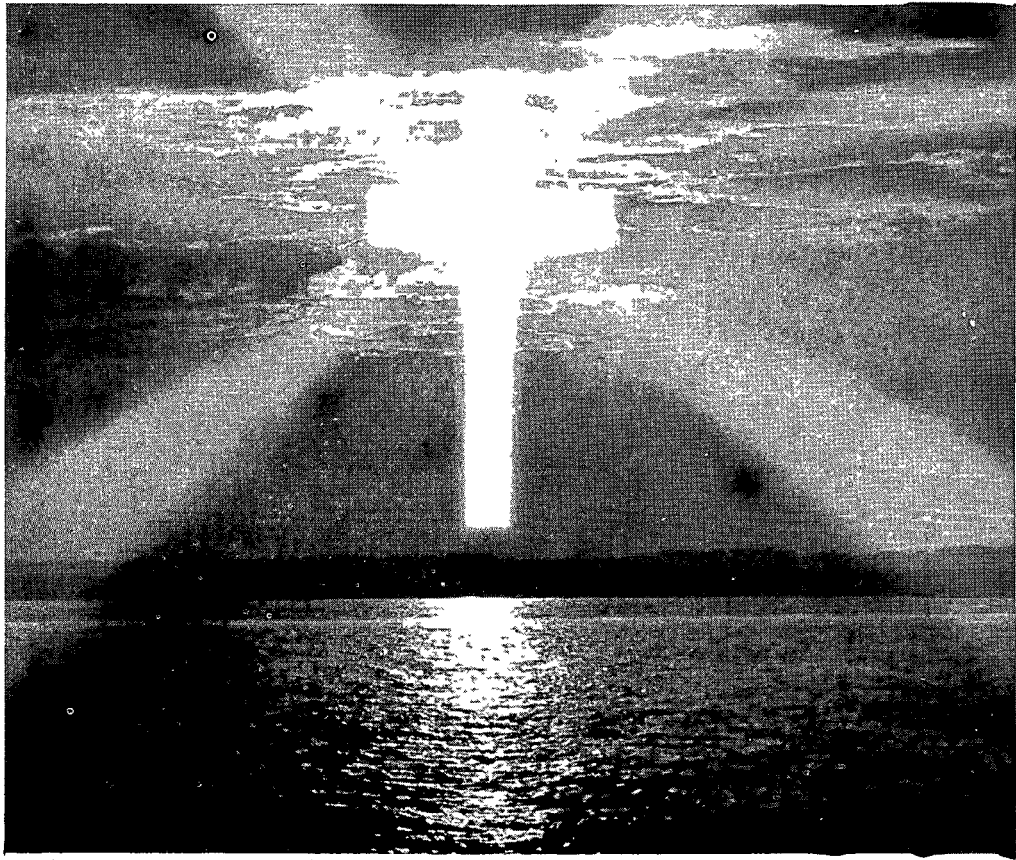
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THE MASTER LECTURES

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LESSON NUMBER FOUR

IN

THE LORD'S PRAYER SERIES

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

Prayer

The Law of Supply

The Origin of Supply

The Attainment of Supply

Wealth - An Interest or a Game

A Means and Not an End

Stewardship

Bread for All

Beloved Centurion:

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD", means one thing to some and to others it has an entirely different meaning. It is quite natural that most people look upon daily bread as the food which we eat, but the words in the Lord's Prayer really have a much deeper meaning than that.

"BREAD" does not mean simply food; it means all things that man requires for a healthy, happy, free and harmonious life. It is true that it does mean the food we buy, but it also means the rent we pay and those material necessities for our families, for God knows we have need of these things. He knows that we would be too weak for any activity, even the effort of speaking would be too much for us, if we did not have food to keep our bodies strong.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD", is a prayer that is truly answered when we are given the necessities for living each day, and when we speak of the "bread of life", we firmly believe that this is what is meant in the Lord's Prayer.

We can also feel that in praying for our daily bread, we are asking for our intellectual and spiritual needs as well, for we hunger and thirst after knowledge and the sustenance with which to feed the soul. All of the material necessities of life are important and they are part of our "daily bread". In other words, if we were to say, "Give us this day all of those things which are necessary that we may live, not necessarily in luxury but adequately", we would be petitioning Our Lord to give us OUR DAILY BREAD.

As we thus pray, we have in our hearts and in our minds the thought that in receiving our daily bread we are enabled to build up in our body and soul the strength for the work which God gives us to do. It is not right that we ask for more than we need.

So, when we repeat the Lord's Prayer, and as we come to this fourth phase, "Give us this day our daily bread", let us think on it as our need for food, the material means whereby we may secure the food, the work we do to earn the money to buy the food, and the strength to do the necessary work to accomplish all of this; and let us never forget that "our daily bread" means food for the soul as well as food for the body.

The words which are to follow, are, in the opinion of your instructor, so very important. Please make every effort to put yourself in a receptive mood mentally. As we repeat together the following prayer, be earnest in your request in order that you will be the recipient of all good things, Beloved Companion.

PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, I know Thou art rich beyond all calculation, for all things come from Thy creative will. I ask that I may so live and serve as to receive day by day my needed supply, and I ask the same for all Thy children. Amen.

THE LAW OF SUPPLY

III E now pass to the fourth phase of the Lord's Prayer, Give Us This Day Our

Daily Bread; or as it might be translated, Give us our bread for the coming day; or as it might yet again be translated, Give us this day our needful (or needed) bread. From time immemorial in the usages of speech people have used the word "bread" when they really meant all the material things needed for life and health. Jesus used the figurative, picturesque word when it is apparent that the substance of what He meant was, Give us this day our needed supply.

You have observed that this master prayer begins with a reverent approach to God. Then it moves into a prayer for the world, that the kingdom of heaven may replace its errant ways and bring peace, rightness, and happiness to people everywhere. Now it moves into another phase, the elemental one of supply for the needs of physical existence. Life is more than meat, but the meat is necessary to enable one to express life in larger and more important ways. We have to feed the body or we could not even enter upon the endeavors and interests of a day's living. It is the same with all the other material necessities.

So the means to existence, that we may live, appear early in the perfect prayer. They are important, but they are something to be got out of the way at once, so we can get on to the more significant matters. For the moment, however, the question of supply is definitely before us, and we see here that it is not only a proper subject of prayer but a necessary one. This is true, first because it must come from God, and second because prayer helps to hallow it and to suggest that it must be sought in faith and rightness.

~~You can readily see what it would do for the world if this principle were~~ carried out. If breadwinners and people engaged in every kind of work and enterprise would go about the day's work with this prayer in their hearts, make their labor a continuance of the prayer, and do what they have to do in the spirit of the petition, it would at once bring work and business into line with the kingdom standard of life. Instead of being a burden and a problem economic life would be a service and a joy. If money-making were kept within the boundaries of this prayer it would never get out of hand as it sometimes does. We would stop saying business is business, and begin saying business is a service to God and man.

Two words stand out in this sentence of the Lord's Prayer, one of which has already figured in it. They are the words "our" and "daily". In the Lord's Prayer we are not asking for all the bread we might get, but only for what we need as we go along. We can only consume and use day by day, so we ask God to care for us as need arises. When the Israelites in the wilderness tried to hoard manna beyond their needs they found it did them no good. The spirit of the two words, "our" and "daily" would help us solve the problem of getting and spending before it lays waste our powers. The solution is not hoarding, but the joint creativeness of man and God.

THE ORIGIN OF SUPPLY

TWO things we need to understand very clearly from the beginning. One is that we do not make things; we only manifest them. They do not come from us, but from God. The other is that, this being true, the available supply is limited only by our need and ability to use constructively.

We sometimes get the idea that there is a certain amount of money, mineral resources, agricultural possibilities, and manufactured things, and that when

these are used there is no more to turn to. But where did all these things, including every possible material thing or value, come from anyway? They grew from the creative mind and will of God, the productive power of which has no limits whatever. This understanding will help us to look beyond the handiwork to the hand itself, and know that there is no danger of exhaustion of the divine creativeness. What has already produced so much can produce more in whatever form may be needed.

But we must remember the Source. We must remember that all that which we have belongs to God. We are only the stewards of these material things which God has LOANED to us. That is why we are taught to make it a matter of prayer. Thus we go straight to the point of production, and not merely to some center of distribution.

This concept of material supply will make us not more materialistic but more spiritual. It takes us not farther away from God but nearer to Him. First and last the Lord's Prayer spiritualizes our idea of everything, in this case even our material supply. It sends us to the heavenly Father for what we need, just as our need sent us to our earthly parents when we were children.

We are human, and our tendency is likely to be to ask till we have everything we need, then to keep asking for more and more far beyond the line of necessity. The Father is patient with us, for of course He wants to give us every good thing; but we ourselves should be careful and exercise reason and wisdom at this point. It is all too easy to ask for things we do not need, and even for things it would not be good for us to have.

We have a safeguard in words we have already learned in this prayer, words also used in another connection but applicable anywhere - "Thy will be done". When we have already fared well at the Father's hands, or when we think we want something about the effect of which we are uncertain, we need that background in our praying. We will be far happier and derive far more benefit from the blessings we receive if they are kept within the limits of the Father's will for us. THE PERSON WHOSE POSSESSION OF THINGS HAS THE BLESSING OF HEAVEN ON IT IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN RIGHTLY BE SAID TO BE RICH, WHATEVER THE SUM OF HIS POSSESSIONS MAY BE.

So, if we go to the fields, the mill, the factory, or the market, for this and that, let us go first to God that through these means He may give His blessing.

THE ATTAINMENT OF SUPPLY

GOD HAS HIS OWN WAYS AND MEANS OF GIVING US OUR DAILY BREAD, but they all conform to a certain fundamental principle of which Jesus has quite a little to say in the sermon on the mount. He uses a lily and a sparrow to illustrate how in His providence God honors simple faith. Having referred to the material things and interests of life, He expresses the general law in these simple terms - "SEEK YE FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU."

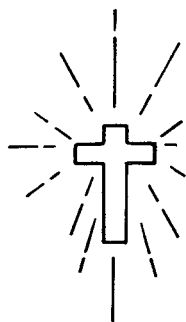
In other words, the way to obtain our material supply is not to make it our primary interest. The first and most important thing is to keep ourselves in harmony with Him who controls it. If you wanted to obtain a certain position or acquire a certain piece of property, you would do nothing at all about it till you had first sought out the person who controls the position or owns the property, and had come to an understanding with him.

It is that simple with our material supply. One does not just seize it, appropriate it, or take it from someone else. He goes to the One who owns and controls it. He seeks out God, His kingdom, and His righteousness, as the instruction reads, and comes to an understanding. After that getting what one needs is not only easy, but it sometimes requires no effort at all.

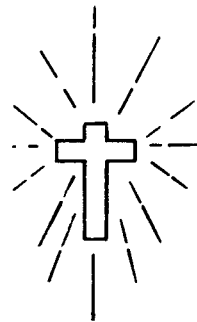
At any rate, the value of possessions depends on the order of importance in which they are placed and the relations they sustain to the kingdom and its righteousness. Placed first, possessions are of doubtful worth, and one may not even be able to get them. Placed second, their value is normal, and help in getting them is available.

In decimals, the significant figures are one to nine. Other quantities are expressed by adding zeros which alone have no value. Zeros take on value as they are added to significant figures. Placed before these real values they decrease their value. Placed after them, they increase it.

~~It is so with the values of life. The zeros of life have worth only as~~ they are placed after the significant things. We make ourselves POORER every time we put secondary matters first, and we make ourselves RICHER every time we add a value after something the worth of which is greater, especially after the kingdom and its righteousness, which is supreme.



Everything becomes simple when we have God, but without Him, nothing is so. Everything would be simple if we had the kingdom, but until we do, everything will be confusing and difficult. Even though we must wait longer for the worldwide kingdom, we can still have it in our own lives, and that simplifies things for us. Without God's kingdom and his righteousness the CHANNELS of BLESSING are BLOCKED, and things are less than their best. With them THESE CHANNELS ARE OPEN AND FREE.



People love to repeat the term "go-getter". They say that is what one has to be to acquire things. Even the dictator and the bandit are go-getters, but here is a better way to acquire what we need. The first law of comfort, success, and security is to make one's life an abiding place for God's kingdom and righteousness. When they have been found, the rest of the good of life comes easier.

WEALTH - AN INTEREST OR A GAME

THE acquiring of things early became an interest of life. Primitive man

gathered what he needed from the fields and forests. Gradually the needs of life increased and became more complicated, so specialization and the profit motive entered the picture. Business had emerged. At first it was a means of earning one's daily bread, then it became a means of making money for the sake of money, and at last it became a kind of tug of war to see who could accumulate the most. Need had nothing to do with it any more. It was a matter of seeing who was the strongest and most clever, acquiring possessions not because anyone needed them, but to surpass someone else.

Forces organized for the struggle. The machine became more important than the man, and the dividend more so than his family. Relationships that had been warm and friendly were replaced with relationships that were cold, calculating, and impersonal. These were not means of obtaining the daily bread God had promised, but contests to see how much of the goods of the earth could be captured. The means of obtaining the needed supply and as much more as possible was no longer to be the prayer of faith but the force of advantage.

Many people realize that as the needy must come to the throne of grace to ask for the needs of life, so the rich and the would-be rich must turn back from the throne of Mammon to the Father's storehouse.

The head of a small business enterprise said to the writer one day: "I have just been figuring up, and I find that thirty-five families are living out of this business. They all have good homes, are living in comfort, educating their children, and counting in the life of the community. We are grateful to have been able to make this place count that much in the life of the town and even that of the nation."

The speaker was a man of faith, who prayed and worked for his own daily bread, and realized that a part of his service to God was to help open a channel by which others could do the same. To him business was not a game but a service, not a means of snatching bread from others but of placing it within their reach. Another thought along similar lines - we at your Mayan Order Headquarters like to think that there are hundreds upon hundreds of homes that are happy and successful as a result of Mayan teachings, and we are indeed grateful for the privilege of being a channel for these blessings.

The Book of Exodus speaks very plainly of what happened when some tried to gather more manna than they needed for the day. "It bred worms and stank", are the words. The overdone amassing of possessions results in two great tragedies. One is that the loot grows stale in the hands of the greedy one. The other is that someone else, perhaps someone who is very needy, must go without. This is a serious misdeed, for it is an interference with the workings of divine providence.

A certain student came to the end of a day with funds exhausted and only a small bag of crackers for dinner. He went to bed, laid his problem in God's hands, and fell asleep. Next morning he was wakened by a telephone call from the President's office at the College. The President's secretary had to be away for a few weeks, and the student was asked if he would care to come in and keep the work going. By the time the secretary returned, another job was open to him. To this day his approach to the problem of supply is the simple one of faith.

A MEANS AND NOT AN END

WE must remember, as we have already hinted, that all that is represented by the term "our daily bread" is a means and not an end. When we have depended on God's bounty, and He has opened the way to our comfort, and by labor or some other legitimate means we have received it, we have not yet begun to meet the challenge of life. We have only prepared ourselves to do so.

Living as though material things were an end within themselves is like maintaining a great, complex, costly machine; keeping it cleaned, oiled, and supplied with fuel; then just letting it run till it wears itself out without ever producing or constructing anything. Like a machine, a life is here to count for something. All that goes to maintain it is for the purpose of making and keeping it fit to do its work and play its part in the life of the world.

Each one of us, no matter how humble and obscure he may consider himself, has a mission. Each is born into the world for a specific purpose. There is something that needs to be done toward establishing the kingdom of heaven which he alone can do. If he does not do it, a long time may be required to raise up someone who will. To this mission, whatever it may be and whether it be great or small, someone is divinely called and anointed. God gives him his daily bread not merely that he may eat it, but that he may be nourished for his part in making this an ever better world for its people, including himself, to live in. (Please read this paragraph again - it is important and it is true).

The nourishment of our bodies should keep us able to see, think about, and understand the divine purpose working in all things everywhere. What scope of opportunity and meaning this gives to life. We see that it is not a process of drifting aimlessly about on the sea of time, but one of choosing a port, charting a course, and setting sail for a goal.

A friend expressed sympathy to Helen Keller that she is blind. Miss Keller replied that there is one thing worse than not having eyes with which to see, and that is having eyes and yet not seeing. That is the way it is with people who do not see the purposefulness of life and do something about it. They are taking something without giving any value in return. God has simply been good enough to pay them in advance for work they do not perform.

We are all consumers. We have to be, for we cannot live without it. But we are here to be producers too. There is no choice between them. Each of us must be the one, and he should be both. Our daily bread is merely fuel for the engine so it may perform the purpose of its existence.

What are we here to do with life? Two things. The first is to make our lives as full, rich, fine, and capable as we can. The second is to make this combination of power and equipment that is one's self, help to accomplish God's will in the world. Those who realize and do this are the happy people of any age. Those who do not are unsatisfied ones.

So the work of the world and the better conditions it brings about are simply the transmutations of the daily bread people have had the faith to ask, and God has had the goodness to see that they received.

STEWARDSHIP

SINCE so many temptations and dangers attend the matter of getting and managing our material supply, important as it is, some reliable safeguard is needed. Fortunately there is such a check, one that has proved effective in the experience of many people. It is what is commonly called the stewardship of possessions. Let us consider it at this point.

Reduced to its simplest terms, stewardship is simply the management of possessions not as an owner but as a trustee. How can we really own what we have, when all things belong to God, and He has simply allowed us the use of the necessary property, money, and sustenance for our comfort and well being? How can we claim that we own what so evidently belongs to Him?

Considering ourselves absolute owners of what we have tempts us to be vain-glorious about it, to use it selfishly and even destructively, to withhold its benefits from others, and ruthlessly to plunder the earth for more, going to any possible length beyond the measure of our needs.

One who sees himself as a steward or administrator has quite a different attitude. He regards himself as a caretaker, responsible to God as the Owner. He feels free to make only wise and constructive use of the property entrusted to him, not to consume it all but to try to increase it and invest it wisely under the authority of the One who has entrusted it to his care. He gets his share, but the Owner gets His share also.

People who handle their property this way seldom get reckless. They do not buy grief and trouble with what they have, but find that their care and sense of responsibility makes the property yield a better return for themselves while it is yielding an honest return to God for His work in His world.

Some continue to insist that the supply they acquire and accumulate is absolutely theirs. A Bishop preached a sermon on stewardship in a certain church. It stirred dissent in the heart of a wealthy member of the congregation, who invited the Bishop to take a ride with him that afternoon.

They drove through a magnificent countryside, past rich and fertile acres of fine farm and timberland. The Bishop expressed admiration.

"I'm glad you like it", said the layman. "I bought that land and paid for it. It is entered in my name in the county records. I am legally acknowledged as its owner. I can use it, let it lie idle, sell it, keep it, or give it away as I may please. When I die the title will pass to my heirs. Everyone else acknowledges my ownership. And do you still say that I do not OWN it?"

There was a sly twinkle in the Bishop's eye as he gently replied, "Ask me again a hundred years from now."

He meant that all titles ultimately revert to God, which is true because God owns all things. If we remember that we are not owners, but stewards, administrators, managers, we will reap less trouble and more profit from our part of God's world estate.

BREAD FOR ALL

LET us close this lesson by centering our attention again on that word "our". It told us in the first sentence that God is the Father of all. Now it tells us to ask Him to grant daily bread to all. The prayer does not say, "Grant me this day my daily bread." Brothers in the home would never think of the necessities of life in such a way, would they? People who would appropriate the values of life to themselves would not be very good kingdom material, would they? You cannot build a brotherhood without compassion one for another.

We have already indicated that the word "bread" is used here merely to represent all the material necessities of life. Food, however, is a prime necessity. No one can long live and work without it. Those who would hoard it would deliberately deny existence to others.

It is a fearful thing to be hungry, or to lack clothing, shelter, and essential creature comforts. It is a still more fearful thing to see loved ones in need of them and not be able to provide them. It is a fearful thing to let a sum of money stand between anyone and life for himself or his family. We should have nothing in the world life that invites such conditions.

God will not deny to anyone his daily bread, but sometimes the people by whom He sends it will. He reaches it out to His ~~children, and sometimes an intruding hand will seize it before~~ they can grasp it. This sometimes happens to people who cannot defend their rights. It is all out of keeping with the spirit of the Lord's Prayer. It is a shameful thing to be true of anyone that God has to find ways to feed any of His children in spite of him.

Our lovely earth home should be made a place where the essential needs of life are obtainable by all - food, shelter, clothing, good books, medicine, and the like. We cannot afford to have such things out of people's reach. In a good home it would be seen to that they are available.

The foundation of all we have said in this lesson is that if we seek God's kingdom and righteousness first, and if we ask in faith, He will see that our material necessities are met. That seems a strong and sweeping statement, but not too much so to many of us who have put it to the test, and know how dependable it is. We are amazed when we remember what faith has done in our times of need, but we had to dare to have that faith.

But in this prayer Jesus enlarges the scope of both need and supply to the proportions of the whole world. We look forward to a tearless world, but a hungry and destitute world would hardly be that. It took faith to believe in God's bounty for ourselves as individuals. WE MUST JUST INCREASE THAT FAITH TO LIFT A LARGER LOAD AND INCLUDE FRIEND, NEIGHBOR, AND STRANGER IN IT TOO.

Again as we close a lesson we are impressed with the vastness of meaning the Master packed into this short prayer. How it reaches to the edges of life and of the needs and interests of the race! It is said that there is enough

atomic power in the head of a pin to blow up a mountain. NOW LET US SAY THAT THERE'S ENOUGH SPIRITUAL POWER IN THIS ONE LITTLE PRAYER TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD INTO A LOVELY AND HAPPY HOME FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.



And now we leave this phase of the Lord's Prayer, but I am deeply desirous that you do not forget the thoughts we have left with you. If you will live by these truths, your life will be richer, fuller and happier. NOTHING CAN STOP IT.

And, remember always that as you do for others and help your fellow man along the sometimes rocky road of life's highway, your own blessings will multiply. I do not mean that you should help others in order that you might benefit; you must extend your help because you desire to do so.

You, as a Mayan Centurion, know your obligations and responsibility in the service of Mayan Ministry. Remember your vows to pray daily for those who have sent in their written requests to our little Chapel of Miracles. Do not fail in this; it is your duty and your privilege as a Mayan Minister. The large number of Centurions in all parts of the United States, Canada and other countries are a tremendous force for good, as their heads are bowed in earnest prayer at the time of the Angelus Call, for those who have requested help. DO NOT FALTER IN THIS.

May we remind you again that the source of all good is your Heavenly Father. ~~The little verse written by Maltbie D. Babcock expresses it so well in the following words:~~

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill,
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower,
And the sun and the Father's will.

And now, let us close with our

AFFIRMATION

I depend upon God for my needed supply, and I am the more certain of it because I ask the same blessing for every other member of the human race.

May your prayers for all good things
be answered,

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR

The next lesson in the series will take up the fifth phase of THE MASTER PRAYER, "And Forgive Us Our Trespases As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us." Therein you will find the following subjects:

Prayer
Forgive Us for What
Forgiveness To the Rescue
What Forgiveness Does Not Do

Bookkeeping
The Other Side of the Shield
Forgive Enthusiastically
At Peace With All